

**REPORT/RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
OF SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA  
AND RECORD OF ACTION**

36

May 13, 2003

**FROM: KENT PAXTON, CHILDREN'S NETWORK OFFICER**  
Children's Network

**SUBJECT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT FOR RIVERSTONES AND CHILDREN'S HOPE GROUP HOMES**

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve Letters of Support to the State Department of Social Services Rate Setting Bureau for Riverstones and Children's Hope group homes to increase their Rate Classification Levels from 11 to 12 and from 6 to 8 respectively.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** County departments, including Children's Services (DCS), Behavioral Health (DBH), and the Probation Department are responsible for meeting the residential treatment needs of minors in their care. Many of these minors require specialized residential treatment services as ordered by the Juvenile Court or required by the Education Code. Pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 11462, the California Department of Social Services Foster Care Rate Setting Bureau requires a letter of support from the placing or host County to allow a Rate Classification Level increase.

Riverstones and Children's Hope group home programs are both State Licensed residential treatment providers for DCS and DBH. The Riverstones Program has two 6-bed group homes located in Angeles Oaks and has been serving boys ages 12 to 17 since 2000. The Children's Hope Program has been serving children ages 9 to 12 in San Bernardino County since November 1996. Both programs provide residential treatment services for children who have emotional and/or behavioral problems related to histories of physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, inadequate parenting or supervision, and relationship concerns.

Riverstones and Children's Hope are capable of accepting children with complex mental health issues and behavioral problems that cannot be handled in a foster care or other lower group home settings. The programs are an important component in the county's system of residential treatment for children who would otherwise be experiencing multiple placement failures, lengthy inpatient hospitalizations, or long-term institutionalization at the State Hospital.

The State classifies group homes into Rate Classification Levels (RCL) based on types/levels of services, amounts and types of staffing, and treatment programs. Riverstones is a group home program currently designated as RCL 11 but has the resources to serve minors who require placement in an RCL 12 home. Children's Hope is a group home program currently designated

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as RCL 06; however, they have the resources to serve minors who require placement in an RCL 08 home.

DCS and the Interagency Placement Committee (with representatives from DCS, Probation, and Behavioral Health), are recommending an RCL increase for both Riverstones and Children's Hope based upon the fact that the services they provide and the population of children they serve would be placed at are a higher RCL. The Children's Policy Council has reviewed and approved these recommendations on April 23, 2003. These increases will provide appropriate reimbursement to Riverstones and Children's Hope for the services they already provide to San Bernardino County children.

Approval of this item supporting Riverstones' and Children's Hope upgrades will better reflect the key role the programs play in our county's continuum of residential care and better fiscally support the efforts of the programs. Also, with the approval of this item, there are potential cost savings by providing eligible juveniles with residential care locally as opposed to placement outside of the county.

**REVIEW BY OTHERS:** This item was reviewed and approved by County Counsel (Ruth Stringer, Deputy County Counsel) on May 5, 2003, HSS Finance (Kris Letterman, Administrative Manager) on April 28, 2003, and the County Administrative Office (Gary Morris, Administrative Analyst) on May 1, 2003.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:** If the State approves these RCL increases, the monthly difference per child between the RCL 11 rate (\$5234) and the RCL 12 rate (\$5613) would be \$379, and between the RCL 06 rate (\$3,344) and the RCL 08 rate (\$4,102) would be \$758. The increased additional monthly cost for 12 beds at RCL 12 and 6 beds at RCL 8 would be \$4548 each for a total additional monthly cost of \$9096 for both programs. Of these costs, the State's monthly share is approximately 20% (\$1819), the Federal monthly share is approximately 38% (\$3457), and the monthly Local Cost is 42% (\$3820). Adequate appropriations and revenue have been included in the FY 02/03 Foster Care budget.

**Cost Reduction Review:** The County Administrative Office has reviewed this agenda item and concurs with the Department's proposal and recommends this action based on the potential cost savings of having eligible juveniles in residential care place locally as opposed to out of County.

**SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT(S):** ALL

**PRESENTER:** Kent Paxton, Children's Network Officer, Children's Network  
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